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ABSTRACT

This seventh-grade lesson plan asks students (working in teams) to create a multimedia advertising campaign on a current controversial issue. The lesson plan states that team members are not to apply any dialogue (either written or verbal) to any part of their presentation so that they may emulate the non-verbal, image only process that Martin Luther used when he began the Protestant Reformation. It provides background information on Martin Luther; presents the task; suggests activities for the team; lists resources; gives learning advice; discusses evaluation format; provides concluding discussion questions; and offers reflection questions. The teacher notes section gives grade level/unit; suggests length of lesson and lesson purpose; addresses history/social science and language arts standards; considers preparation for the lesson; and suggests interdisciplinary connections for art. (BT)

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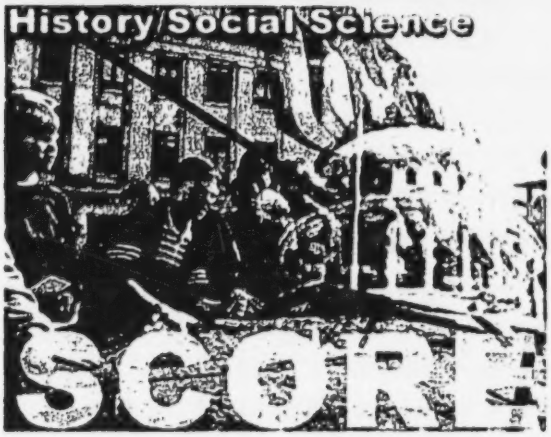


**Schools of California Online Resources for Education (SCORE): Connecting California's Classrooms to the World**

# A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words

**7th Grade Lesson by David R. MacDonald**

SO 034 252

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# A PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS

It has been said throughout time that a picture could be worth a thousand words. As you can imagine though, for each individual that views it, the words can be decidedly different. It has been stated that during the time of Martin Luther only 3-5% of the population could read the written word. In order to send a message or to just simply get one across, the messenger had to be extremely resourceful. When Luther lit the fire of the Protestant Reformation, he fanned the flames using persuasive images disguised as art. Some of these would even be called propaganda in today's thinking. Those for whom the messages were intended had little trouble deciphering the meaning. It is now most ironic that in our present, mostly literate society, we still see the use of images as a major means of influence in TV, movies, Public Service ads, and especially political campaigns. It's not what people are saying that's troublesome, but how it is they are saying it.

**THE TASK**

You and your team are to create a multimedia, image only ad campaign on a relevant controversial issue of our present time. Team members are not to apply any dialogue (either written or verbal) to any part of their presentation so that you may emulate the non-verbal, image only, process that Martin Luther used when he began the Protestant Reformation.

**Kissing the Feet of the Pope**

Source: Manuscripts, Books, and Maps: The Printing Press and a Changing World

Bruce Jones

**THE PROCESS**

In your team you are to divide the tasks amongst yourselves. Activities can include but are not limited to:

1. A Public Service Announcement
2. PowerPoint Presentation
3. Web Page
4. Art Gallery
5. Video Presentation

## RESOURCES

http://communication.ucsd.edu/bjones/Books/luther.html

http://www.dalton.org/students/u2/luther/printing.html

http://www.acs.ucalgary.ca./~elsegal/C_Transp/C11_Protestantism.html

http://www.educ.msu.edu/homepages/laurence/reformation/Luther/Luther.htm

## LEARNING ADVICE

It is important for you to remember that in Martin Luther's time 95% of all the people were illiterate, meaning that they were unable to read. It was his images that set the fire and allowed those able to interpret his images to join him in the Reformation. In today's society you are constantly being bombarded by images designed to influence and often change your behavior. It is with this backdrop that you are to develop your advertising campaign.

## EVALUATION

Your team will format an evaluation form to be used by other class members as they view your work. Your grade will in large part be determined by whether or not your message is understood. You also will be assessed on the quality and thoroughness of your work and the timely manner in which it is delivered.

## CONCLUSION

This activity is about how images are used to raise awareness, influence thoughts and feelings, and generate opinions. This process of using non rational persuasion to influence thinking is called propaganda. Think about these definitions as you answer the following questions:

- Think of an example of both a positive and a negative use of persuasion using images. Is the use of propaganda right or wrong?
- Should businesses and politicians be allowed to persuade people to do things they would otherwise not be inclined to do?
- On the subject of ethics, how much persuasion is too much?
- Martin Luther used some provocative scenes to convey his point of view. Was he fair to the Catholic Church?

**REFLECTION**

Answer one of the two questions.

1. In what ways have you seen propaganda being used to sway public opinion?
2. What if anything would you have done differently if you had been in charge of Martin Luther's campaign against the Catholic Church? How might you as the Catholic Church have used media to respond?

**TEACHER NOTES**

**Grade Level/Unit**
**Grade 7** -- The Protestant Reformation

**Length of Lesson**

Depending on the artistic strength of your students, you may want to increase the amount of time necessary to complete this lesson.

Done completely, this lesson could last 2-4 weeks. Extensions from this could be applied any number of ways from other commercial productions, to one act plays etc. The key thing to remember is that non-verbal communication is the focus.

**Lesson Purpose**

To understand propaganda and how it is used both in the past and today's times.

**Standards**

History-Social Science Standards Grade 7: Students trace the historical development of the Reformation and compare the aspirations and experiences of men and women to other times and places, with emphasis on the effects of the theological, political, and economic differences that emerged and the influence of religious conflicts on government actions.

Language Arts Standards Grade 7 Reading Comprehension: Students read and understand differences among various categories of informational materials.

**Preparation for the lesson**

Before you begin the project you may want to cover the topic of propaganda so it will be readily identifiable to the students. A key ingredient to this whole project is the idea of

non-verbal communication and in order for your student's project to be similar to that of Martin Luther, they need to follow his lead.

This website has an activity on commercials that will help to prepare students for recognizing techniques of persuasion used by advertisers.

http://yn.la.ca.us/ccc/ceclang/ceclang.25.txt

This site gives clear explanations of the different techniques used in propaganda, many of which are used in advertising and could be incorporated into the visuals that the students are creating.

http://carmen.artsci.washington.edu/propaganda/contents.htm

**NOTE:** The 1998 film Wag the Dog portrays the calculated use of media to markedly sway public opinion. Excerpts from this film, especially the "Bosnian Survivor" computer generated scene might be useful. **Carefully edit this "R" rated film.**

**Interdisciplinary Connections**

Art

This will be a good opportunity for those students who normally struggle with routine assignments but excel in art to express themselves in a positive way.

**Adaptations for Special Needs Students**

This lesson will allow for success for most students, in that there are many opportunities for successful conclusions. You may modify, eliminate or change any part of the lesson to suit the needs of your students.

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